N°8

The Doctrine of a future State necessary to the Welfare and Support of Civil Government.

A

SERMON

Preached at the

ASSIZES

HELD AT

WARWICK,

By the HONOURABLE

Mr. Juſtice *PAGE,*

ON

Wedneſday, March 28. 1739.

By WILLIAM CLEAVER A. M.

Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of the *High Sheriff,* and the Gentlemen of the *Grand Jury.*

OXFORD,

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Imprimatur,

THEOPH. LEIGH,

Vice-Can. OXON.

April 17. 1739.

TO

THOMAS HARDY Eſq;

High-Sheriff of the County of *Warwick*, and to the GENTLEMEN of the *Grand Jury*, viz.

William Holbech Eſq;
Edward Ripington Eſq;
Moreton Slaney Eſq;
Thomas Webb Eſq;
Thomas Turner Gent.
William Archer Gent.
Thomas Evits Gent.
William Shakeſpear Gent.
John Bree Gent.
John Holyoake Gent.
Elias Webb Gent.
Barn. Horſeman Gent.
Thomas Ailworth Gent.
John Burrows Gent.
Thomas Meddows Gent.
William Meachin Gent.
Iſaac Twycroſs Gent.

GENTLEMEN,

THE favourable Reception which This Sermon met with from the Pulpit, ſhould never have prevail'd on me to make it publick, had not your joint Requeſt put it out of my Power to do otherwiſe. I am very ſenſible that many Blemiſhes will now appear in it, which

which before eſcap'd the obſervation even of the Judicious hearer; and therefore I ſhall ſtand in the greater Need of your Protection, that I may receive that Candour and Indulgence from the World, under the Sanction of your Names, which the Meanneſs of this Diſcourſe would not permit me to expect. However I ſhall think my ſelf happy under all the Cenſures that can be paſs'd upon it, If it ſhould in any Meaſure contribute to thoſe Ends, which you propoſed in deſiring its Publication, the advancement of Virtue, and the Diſcredit of the moſt faſhionable Vices; that it may be ſucceſsful in theſe effects is the earneſt deſire of,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt obedient

humble Servant

W. CLEAVER.

St. Luke XII, 5.

I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear: fear Him, which after he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell; Yea, I ſay unto you fear Him.

THESE are the words of our Bleſſed Saviour, who was too well acquainted with Human Nature, to leave his Laws without the ſecurity of a Sanction; or to expect that Men would pay Obedience to his Precepts, from the mere abſtract conſideration, of their Fitneſs, Excellence, or Beauty. He knew what was in Man, and the powerful influence of thoſe motives upon our Conduct, which either awaken our Hopes, or alarm our Fears. He therefore wiſely annex'd ſuch Rewards and Penalties, to our Obſervance, or Neglect, of His Authority, as render all the preſent conſequences of our actions, trifling and inconſiderable; ſo that If We are at any Time tempted to deviate from the Rules of his Religion, in expectation of the higheſt Temporal Honours or Advantages, We are reminded by him of a much brighter Proſpect, a never-fading Crown of Glory, which awaits our patient Con-

tinuance in Well-doing. Or If Death, in all its Horrors, ſhould be preſented to our View, in Order to deter us from our Duty, We are forewarned of a ſtill higher Object of our fears, *fear Him*, ſays our Bleſſed Saviour, *which after he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell; Yea, I ſay unto you fear him.*

I ſhall not inſiſt at preſent, on the Expediency of ſuch Motives as Theſe, for the Support of the declining Cauſe of Virtue in general, and for the promotion of the Happineſs of men conſidered as Individuals, but ſhall confine my ſelf wholly in the following Diſcourſe, to the Proof of this Propoſition; -- that a firm belief of ſuch a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, as the Goſpel reveals, is neceſſary to the Peace, Order and Happineſs of Civil Society. And the Truth of This will appear, If we conſider,

I. *Firſt*, The Inſufficiency of Human Laws in themſelves for the attainment of Theſe Ends; and

II. *Secondly*, Their Inſufficiency for theſe purpoſes even in Conjunction with any other Principle that can be invented, excluſive of the Expectations of a future ſtate.

I. And firſt I am to conſider the Inſufficiency of Human Laws in *themſelves*, for the attainment of the Ends of Civil Government, the Temporal Happineſs and Security of the People.

And

And Here, The First Defect obſervable in Human Laws, is, that They cannot be accommodated to all the Variety of Circumſtances and Events, that may occur in civil Life. Many and continual Evils will ariſe in the courſe of human affairs, which the wiſeſt Lawgiver could not foreſee, and which his utmoſt Precaution could not guard againſt. For when Men are under no reſtraints, but from the fear of Civil Puniſhments, New methods of Injuſtice will be contrived, and unheard of Villanies invented, beyond the Expectation of the moſt prudent Governors; and the Impunity of their Authors, ariſing from this Defect of the Laws, will ſtill encourage the Growth of theſe Diſorders; till at length, Society itſelf will be converted into a Scene of Miſery, and Confuſion; and the Civil Magiſtrate, unable to reſtrain the open Violences of his Subjects, muſt reſign his Poſt to the moſt Powerful oppreſſor. Thus inſufficient are human Laws, of themſelves, to preſerve the peace and order of Mankind; but when Religion is called in to their Aſſiſtance, This Defect is in a great meaſure ſupplied; for the Divine Sanctions are annex'd to every Circumſtance, to every Degree of Guilt, and *the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all Unrighteouſneſs of Men.*

But if This Inconvenience could have been removed without the aids of Religion, yet ſtill there would appear other Inſtances of the inſufficiency of Human Laws, to provide for the

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Welfare of Society. For at moſt Theſe Laws can only reach to the publick and open Violations of Juſtice and Equity; whilſt every hidden Fraud will eſcape the Cognizance of the Magiſtrate, and Men will ſtill be left free to the purſuits of Rapine, Avarice and Revenge, by all the Secret devices that the Wit or Malice of Human Nature, unaw'd by any Principles of Religion, can invent. And in proportion to the Severity of the Laws againſt ſuch offences as theſe, will be the Craft of men in concealing them; ſo that the very attempt to puniſh every Vice as it deſerves, will occaſion many to eſcape without any puniſhment at all. As a Remedy to theſe Evils, Religion will teach men, that no Sin can elude the notice of an all-ſeeing Judge, or avoid the reſentment of an infinitely Juſt one; and that if God will exact from us an account of every *Idle Word*, much more ought we to expect the Severity of his Vengeance, upon every the leaſt Injurious action, however ſecretly committed, againſt our Fellow-Creatures.

Beſides This, The Nature and Genius of civil Society, will not allow, that even Every Publick Crime, ſhould be puniſh'd up to the Height of its Demerit, or in proportion to the Evils, it introduces into the World; becauſe ſuch a Severity would, in ſome Caſes, be attended with greater, and higher Diſorders; than thoſe for the prevention of which it was applied. And for a Proof of this, I need not, I cannot, enumerate

all

all the Miſchiefs ariſing to the Publick from thoſe Crimes, which now too often paſs under the name of Gallantry; or repreſent the Shame, Confuſion, and Miſeries that are Conſequent upon the Loſs of innocence; or the Depth of *that* Diſtreſs which a Father, a Husband, a Brother, or a Friend are ſenſible of, upon theſe Occaſions; yet if the Authors of theſe Crimes, were puniſh'd only as common Robbers and Incendiaries, (a puniſhment far below the Demerit of their offences) ſuch a Severity, tho' juſt in itſelf, might produce more fatal effects on the Publick, than even the Crimes it was deſign'd to correct; becauſe it would introduce ſuch a train of Unnatural Vices, as muſt end in the deſtruction of human Society itſelf. Here then is an Inſtance, where both the appointment, and the Omiſſion, of a proper Penalty, would be attended with conſequences, too pernicious to the Welfare of mankind, to be overlooked by a wiſe Lawgiver. But in a Country, where the Chriſtian Sanctions have an Univerſal Influence on the Minds of Men, Theſe Evils will be ſure to meet with a porportionable Remedy. For it is hard to be conceived, that Perſons who are really convinced, there is a Righteous Avenger of ſuch Crimes, and that *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will Judge*, ſhould ever venture thus to diſturb the Sacred Order of Society, in Defiance of that Power, whom They moſt of all revere.

And as ſome Crimes cannot receive the Puniſhment

niſhment due to them from the Civil Magiſtrate; ſo others, muſt go entirely unpuniſh'd by him, notwithſtanding their Malignant Influence on the Publick Intereſt. Such are Ingratitude, the want of Beneficence and Compaſſion, and the Neglect of the Common Duties of Humanity. The *Perſians* and (*a*) *Athenians* were, perhaps, the only People that ever attempted to prevent Ingratitude, by the force of civil Sanctions; and the reaſons of their attempt, ſufficiently diſcover, how prejudicial They eſteem'd this Crime, to the well-being of Society. For (*b*) *Xenophon* ſays, the *Perſians* looked upon the ungrateful, as perſons void of all Religion, and equally regardleſs of the Welfare of their Friends, their Parents, and their Country. And a little reflection on the Nature of Society will convince us, that Gratitude to Benefactors, Compaſſion to the Diſtreſs'd, and Humanity to All, are neceſſary Ingredients in the Character of a good Subject. For without the Exerciſe of theſe Social affections, that Union and Dependency, which ought to ſubſiſt between all the Members of a well-conſtituted Government, can neither be obtain'd, nor preſerv'd; and the chief Happineſs of Civil Life will be loſt, where a mutual Intercourſe of good Offices, is not promoted by ſome means or other. But human Laws of themſelves can never entirely accom-

(*a*) Val. Max. Exemp. L. 2. C. 2. S. 6. alſo L. 5. C. 3. S. 6.
(*b*) Xen. de Cyr. Inſtit. p. 10. Edit. Hutch.

pliſh

pliſh theſe Ends. For what Laws can ever ſufficiently enforce the free acts of Beneficence and Compaſſion? Some Proviſion indeed has been made, for the relief of Poverty, by the Wiſdom of our own State; But how unequal the Utmoſt Proviſion of this kind muſt be, to the Wants, Neceſſities and various Afflictions of the World, is eaſy to be obſerved. Beſides, the civil enforcement of theſe Duties, will deſtroy all that pleaſure which ariſes from a mutual exchange of kind Offices: Charity itſelf, will become a mere Act of Compulſion; and Gratitude, no more than paying a Juſt Debt. To remove theſe inconveniences, the Chriſtian Expectations, without leſſening either the Freedom or Virtue of our actions, oblige us to treat every Object of Compaſſion, with the utmoſt Tenderneſs and Humanity; and in proportion to our ſeveral abilities, to comfort the Miſerable, relieve the Indigent, and ſuccour the Diſtreſſed. -- Further --

Another Defect obſervable in human Laws, is, that They cannot, of themſelves, be any Counter-ballance to the ſtrength of the ſelfiſh paſſions, nor imprint on the minds of men a diſintereſted concern for the publick Welfare; and yet from the want of this generous regard to the Community, have aroſe all the Miſeries of Oppreſſion, which are felt under arbitrary Governments, on the one hand; and all the diſtractions, introduced into popular States, by the artful Diſguiſes of licentious men, on the other;

other; who have, in all ages, cover'd the moſt execrable Deſigns, under the ſpecious Pretences of Civil Liberty; and ſometimes have prevailed, ſo as to ſubvert the very foundations of a Lawful Government. But Religion cuts off theſe Evils in their ſource, by reforming that Corruption of the heart, from whence They are deriv'd; by teaching, that *no man ſeek his own, but every man another's Wealth*; and by convincing all, that the deteſted Villain, who ſhall endeavour to enſlave his Country, and the pretended patriot, that would throw it into Confuſion, are equally Objects of the Divine Juſtice.

But were human Laws more extenſive in their Influence than they are, yet ſtill, the adminiſtration of them, muſt be committed to men, who would be exceedingly liable to Corruption, when their minds were not fortified againſt it, by the Principles of Religion, and the Dread of a future Reckoning. The Hiſtory of other Nations, and even of our own in former Ages, would furniſh us with frequent Inſtances of Men, who have been induc'd by the proſpects, of Covetouſneſs, or Ambition, to pervert the Juſtice and Equity of the Laws, to condemn the Innocent, and abſolve the Guilty. And indeed, what Motives can enable that Man to reſiſt the force of a bribe, who neither fears the reſentments of Men here, nor the vengeance of an incenſed Deity hereafter? or what can inſpire an inferior Magiſtrate with

Courage

Courage to deſpiſe the Threat'nings of that Power, which appears to him under the Character of Supreme? But when he is throughly convinced that another Scene of things will ſucceed the preſent, where all perſonated Characters ſhall ceaſe, and the Judge and the Criminal appear before the ſame Tribunal, ſo tremendous a Proſpect will ſufficiently arm him, againſt every preſent Terror, or Allurement.

But ſhould the Magiſtrate himſelf, perſiſt in the Paths of Juſtice without either the Hopes of a Reward, or the Fears of future Vengeance, yet ſtill he muſt *bear the ſword in vain*, and can never ſupport the Majeſty of the Laws, without the Aſſiſtance of ſome higher Principle on his Subjects, than merely the Dread of civil Puniſhments. For theſe would have but little Influence on their Minds, where They would have ſo many Proſpects of eluding them; where the Legal Evidence of the moſt notorious Crimes, would be doubtful and uncertain; and ſuch a Cloud might be drawn over the brighteſt Innocence, as no human Eyes could pierce through. For in a Country where no higher Authority, than that of the Civil Magiſtrate, is acknowledged, The Religion of an Oath can never be eſteemed Sacred; and where that is diſregarded, the very Bond and Cement of Society is diſſolved. *An Oath for confirmation* will not be to *that* People *an end of all ſtrife*; There will be no Teſt whereby to diſtinguiſh between Truth and Falſhood, Guilt and Innocence; and conſequently the Magiſtrate himſelf, can have

no Power to protect the one, or puniſh the other. Such muſt be the Confuſions of that State, where Men only ſtand in awe *of them that can kill the body*, and tremble not at the Diſpleaſure of that Almighty Being, *who after he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell.*

But could the Guilty always be diſcovered, and the Innocent as often juſtified; yet the Fear of Civil Sanctions alone, would not be ſufficient to reſtrain Men, from a Continual Courſe of Rapine and Violence. For Multitudes would even then be found, who would prefer a ſhort Life, ſpent in the eaſy Arts of Theft and Debauchery, to the longeſt Continuance here, in the conſtant Exerciſe of Labour, and the induſtrious Purſuits of Trade. The utmoſt bounds of the Magiſtrate's Power, extend no farther than to the *killing of the body, and after that, He hath no more that He can do*; and yet how would the Dread, even of Death itſelf, be diminiſh'd, when all the Terrors of its Sting was thus entirely removed? How would thoſe Men defie even the Invention of Racks and Tortures, who were firmly perſuaded, that the Fierceneſs of their Pains would be aſſuaged, and utterly vaniſh, together with their Being, in a few Moments? But if They once believed, that the ſhort Severity They undergoe here, will be ſucceeded by never-ending Pains hereafter, by *the gnawings of the Worm that never dieth*, and the ſcorchings of *a Fire that is not quenched*, ſuch a Conſideration as This, is ſufficient to outweigh all the preſent Advantages,

that

that can be reaped from any Purſuit, injurious to the Peace and Welfare of Society.

We have now ſeen the Inſufficiency of Human Laws, in themſelves, for the Attainment of the Ends of Civil Government, The Temporal Happineſs and Security of a People; that Theſe Laws cannot be accommodated to every Circumſtance and Event; that They can extend only to the publick, and open Violations of Juſtice; that even ſome publick, and open Crimes, cannot receive the Puniſhment due to them; and that others muſt eſcape, without any Puniſhment at all; that beſides this Deficiency of Human Laws in their Extent, They are moreover liable to various Abuſes in their Adminiſtration; and even when rightly adminiſtred, have no Penalties annex'd to them, ſufficient to reſtrain the exorbitant Luſts, and Paſſions of Mankind; I proceed therefore, Secondly,

II. To ſhew, that no other Principle, but the Expectations of a future State, can, in any Meaſure, ſupply the Defects of human Laws.

For tho' it hath already appeared, that Religion is every Way adapted to ſupply theſe Defects, yet if any other Principle can be found, of equal Uſe and Advantage to Society, It will of Courſe, when diſcovered, ſuperſede the Neceſſity of Religion to theſe Ends. And here the firſt Principle, which offers itſelf to our Conſideration, is that of a Moral Senſe; a Determination to approve, or diſapprove, of certain moral Actions, and Characters. Whence

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This approbation or diſlike ariſes; whether it be the effect of an Original Inſtinct, interwoven with our Nature; or whether theſe Senſations of the Mind, may not ultimately be derived from Self-love, and a Proſpect of private Happineſs; there is no Occaſion at preſent to determine. Whatever be the Source, and Origin, of theſe Affections; let them be natural, or acquir'd; I ſhall not deny the Reality of them, in many Perſons; but in different Minds, They are to be obſerv'd in all different Degrees. Some have a very quick, and lively Perception, of the Beauty of thoſe Actions, which are cloſely connected with the publick Good; whilſt others, can look upon the very ſame Actions, with more Calmneſs and Indifference. Culture, Education and habitual Uſe, are Neceſſary to ſtrengthen, and improve theſe Affections, wherever They are to be found; and where theſe Methods have been neglected, The Affections themſelves have been weakened, and obſcured in ſome, and utterly extinguiſh'd in others; or elſe we ſhould never have met with ſuch Characters in Hiſtory as Thoſe of a *Herod*, a *Nero*, or a *Caligula*. Nor has This Corruption of the moral Senſe, been confin'd to Individuals alone, but has overſpread whole Countries; the Inhabitants of which, have univerſally practis'd, without the leaſt Signs of Remorſe, the moſt barbarous Cuſtoms; ſuch as Expoſing of Infants, and Murdering of old Men. Nor is This the only Defect of this Principle. For was it as univerſal as could be wiſh'd, and did Every one

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clearly perceive, the Beauty, and Gracefulneſs, of a good Action, yet ſuch a Perception as this, without ſome higher Views, would have but little Influence on our Conduct. For we do not always purſue that in our Practiſe, which we approve moſt in our Thoughts. Men in Eaſe, and Affluence, indeed, who were ſo happy as to be poſſeſs'd of a right Taſte, might, perhaps, be directed by it, in many of their Actions. But even They, would be often tempted to comply with a preſent Intereſt, or to gratify a favourite Paſſion, to the Prejudice of the Community, of which They were Members. Whilſt the Bulk of Mankind, would fall into this Snare much oftener, as their Temptations would be more frequent. And the ſame Arguments, will prove the Inſufficiency of every other internal Principle of human Actions, unleſs it can be ſaid, that there is in Mankind, ſo ſtrong a Bent to the Purſuit of Goodneſs, Virtue, and the publick Intereſt, as no Force of inward Appetites, no Sollicitation of outward Objects, can overcome. But This, I conceive, no one will pretend, who has the leaſt Acquaintance with human Nature.

And If a Moral Senſe be too weak a Principle, to ſupply the Defects of human Laws; a Senſe of Honour, will appear to be a Motive equally partial, and inſufficient, to the Ends propoſed. The Dignity of Virtue, and the Diſhonour of a baſe Action, is indeed a pleaſing Speculation in itſelf; but the Bulk of Mankind have no Leiſure, to purſue theſe Reflections, nor, If They had, would they be directed by them, in their

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Behaviour to each other. The Strength of corrupted Paſſions, would ſoon overwhelm ſuch ſlender Incitements to a Concern for the publick Good, in the Generality of Men, who were influenced by no further Proſpects. And in fact, even thoſe, who would fain paſs in the World, for Men of Honour, never trouble themſelves with any deep Reſearches, into the Unſuitableneſs of Vice in general to the Dignity of a rational Being. For had theſe Conſiderations any real Weight and Influence with them, They would be equally extended to the Prevention of every mean or unjuſt Practice. But it is too notorious, that the preſent prevailing Notions of Honour, lay no reſtraint upon Men, in the Purſuits of Pleaſure; and that even the Violations of the Sacred Ties of Marriage, are not eſteem'd inconſiſtent, with the Character of a Man of Honour. Nor are Theſe the only Defects of the Principle we are now conſidering. It is not only ineffectual to the Reſtraint of the worſt Injuries that can be committed, but likewiſe drives Men upon ſuch Practices, as are directly oppoſite to the very Ends, for which Society was erected. For under Pretence of acting upon this Motive, they are carried on to the moſt ſavage and brutal Actions; to invade the Province of the Civil Magiſtrate himſelf, and turn Avengers of their own Quarrels. The leaſt Appearance of a Stain upon their Honour, muſt be waſh'd out with the Blood of its Author, and the ſlighteſt Affront, is an Injury, that can never be repair'd, but by the Death of the Man, who gave it. Thus

does

does this pretended Principle of Honour, breath nothing but Slaughter, and Revenge, and a Thirſt of Blood, and is ſo far from Supplying the Defects of human Laws, that it demands their utmoſt Aſſiſtance, to correct the Outrage it occaſions.

Nor would a Regard to Reputation be more effectual, than a Senſe of Honour, to curb the Violence of thoſe Paſſions, which human Laws cannot reſtrain. For This would be no check at all to ſecret Frauds, or to any other Villainies, that can be concealed from the Obſervation of Men. And even thoſe Crimes, which lie open to the Notice of the World, would ſcarcely be prevented, by the Strength of this Principle. For Numbers of Men, are always to be found, ſo loſt to all Senſe of Shame, as to have no Concern for their Character, or Reputation. And ſhould even thoſe, who have the tendereſt Regard for it, but once break thro' this Motive; The Force of it upon them, would for ever afterwards be deſtroy'd. And that this would often be the Caſe, where no higher Motives of Conduct are inculcated, any one will be induced to believe, who conſiders the Strength of a Temptation; The Depravity of our Nature; and the Prevalence of bad Examples. But had a Regard to Reputation, a more Univerſal Influence in the World; The good of Society, would not be greatly promoted by ſuch an Influence, in a Country where no better Principles of Action obtain'd. For when once the Fears of a future State where baniſh'd from among Men, Every

Vice

Vice would be recommended to our Imitation, by ſome Example or other, 'till at length the worſt of Crimes would become faſhionable, and might be committed, without the leaſt Danger to the Reputation of their Authors. Nor is This the worſt of it. For in theſe Circumſtances, the very Deſire of Reputation, inſtead of being a Reſtraint, will be apt to encourage Men, to diſtinguiſh themſelves by their Vices, and when Wickedneſs is the prevailing Faſhion, to run into the utmoſt Extravagances of it, as a neceſſary Conſtituent of a polite, and genteel Character.

Nor will the Natural Conſequences of Human Actions, ſupply the Defects of Human Laws. For tho', in general, it be true that ſuch Actions as are conducive to the publick Intereſt of Society, have likewiſe in their own Nature, a Tendency to the private Happineſs of their Authors, yet in the preſent State of Things, too many Inſtances will occur, in which private Intereſt may ſuffer, and Life itſelf be endangered, by a Steady and Uniform Purſuit of publick Good. For ſo long as the World conſiſts of a Mixture of good and bad Characters, Men of the latter Sort, will be continually endeavouring to croſs, and break in upon the Projects of the former, to defeat the natural good Tendency of their beſt Actions, and rob them of thoſe Fruits, which they would otherwiſe receive from their Labours. And on the other Hand, tho' Miſeries are the genuine Effects of Guilt, yet will any one pretend, that there are not frequent Inſtances, where private Intereſt, or Pleaſure,

may

may be promoted, by neglecting the Rules of Society, and even by Actions highly prejudicial to the Welfare of it? And indeed, so far are the Natural Consequences of Human Actions, from Supplying the Defects of Human Laws, that these Laws themselves were invented, and civil Penalties annex'd to them, on purpose to give an additional Weight, to the Natural Inconveniences of Vice, which were found insufficient to deter Men from the Commission of it.

These are the most considerable of those Motives, which have been recommended to the World, as equal, in their Influence, to the Force of Religion, in securing the Peace and Happiness of Society; To examine every Motive that might be suggested, would require more Time, than is usually allotted to Discourses of this Nature; and therefore it may be sufficient to observe in general, that as there appears to be no internal Principle in Man, no innate Tendency, to the Pursuit of publick Intereſt, which may not easily be vanquish'd, by the Violence of inward Passions, or the Strength of outward Temptations; so neither is there any external Motive, besides those of Religion, which can be extended to all Cases; because God only, can in all Circumstances render his Creatures, compleatly happy, or miserable.

It appears therefore from what has been said, that neither human Laws in themselves, nor any other Principle in Conjunction with them, exclusive of the Expectations of a future State, can sufficiently provide for the Ends of Civil Go-

vernment; I ſhall only add one Argument, from Fact, and the Experience of all Ages, which will teach us, that, if all the Reſtraints ariſing from a Senſe of Morality, Honour, Shame, and the Natural Conſequences of Virtue and Vice, joined with the Terrors of Damnation, and the Sword of the Civil Magiſtrate, have always been too weak in their united Force, to prevent frequent Inſtances of Rapine and Violence, Ungodlineſs would like a Torrent, which has broke its Bounds, overflow the whole Land, when once the Fears of a future State, the ſtrongeſt of its Barriers, were removed.

If then a firm Belief, of ſuch a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, as the Goſpel reveals, be thus neceſſary, to the Peace, Order, and Happineſs of Civil Society, it will fall within the Province and Duty of the (*a*) Civil Magiſtrate, to ſee that theſe Principles, be carefully inculcated upon the Minds of his Subjects; that proper Methods of Education be obſerved, and ſuch means of Inſtruction provided, as ſhall ſeem to him moſt expedient, for the Attainment of theſe Ends. In a word, Had not Revelation determined his Choice, to any one particular Scheme of outward Religion, rather than another, yet even in theſe Circumſtances, it would have been his Duty to provide, that ſome Scheme ſhould be eſtabliſhed by Law, in which Theſe Doctrines, ſo neceſſary to the good of Society, might be taught, and the Belief of them univerſally pro-

(*a*) By the Civil Magiſtrate is here meant the Supreme Legiſlative Power in Every Community.

moted;

moted; that even then certain Perſons ſhould be ſet apart, or conſecrated to theſe Offices, and their Characters eſteem'd Sacred, in Order to give the greater Weight to thoſe Principles, which it would be their Duty to cultivate. And where a Religion was thus once eſtabliſhed by Law, the ſame Ends of Society would require, that the Magiſtrate ſhould be inveſted, with a Power to guard it from the Superſtition of Bigots, on the one Hand; and the Rage of Enthuſiaſm, on the other.

Another Inference from the foregoing Diſcourſe, is, that Religion ought not to be eſteem'd a Thing merely Perſonal, ſince the Intereſts of Society, are ſo deeply concern'd, in the moſt important Articles of it; and therefore the Magiſtrate, may juſtly puniſh thoſe, who ſhall preſume publickly to diſpute, the Truth and Certainty of a future State; or ſhall openly endeavour, to perſuade his Subjects, to venture on the Commiſſion of ſuch Crimes, as are prejudicial to Society, under a Pretence, that ſhould there be a future State, Theſe Crimes will be exempted from the Divine Notice and Animadverſion. More eſpecially, do the Ends of civil Government require a peculiar Severity on thoſe Men, who ſhall dare to exempt ſuch Crimes from the Reſentment of God hereafter, which cannot, from the Nature of Society, receive their due Puniſhment here.

A Third Inference ſuggeſted by what has been ſaid, is, that a publick Endeavour to ſet Men free from the Reſtraints of Religion, can no more

more proceed from a Generosity of Spirit, than from the Obligations of Conscience. For were the Discoveries of these Men real, and had we no ground either from Nature, or Reason, or the revealed Will of God, to expect another Life after This, yet what Generosity can there be, in endeavouring to recover Men from an Error, so beneficial in its Influence on human Affairs? or how is it consistent with that Benevolence They so much admire and boast of, to publish their Notions to the World, that are big with such a Train of Evils, as will render Society itself less eligible, than a State of Nature? If therefore we have any regard to the Welfare of our Posterity; any concern for the Honour, Virtue, and Happiness of our Native Country, in the Prosperity or Ruin of which, we must all Share; If we would not behold it a Scene of lawless Outrage, oppressed Innocence, and triumphant Guilt; Let us every one, in our several Stations, use our utmost Endeavour, to preserve the Force of religious Motives upon the Minds of Men; Let us treat every Attempt to lessen their Weight and Efficacy, with a just Indignation and Abhorrence, and regard the Authors of such an Attempt, as Traytors to their Country, Enemies to the common Interests of Mankind, and the very Pests of human Society; who would deprive us of *that* Religion, which is our best Ornament and Support, and without which, We cannot be preserved from *Confusion and Every Evil Work.*

FINIS.